Detention of Wagons of Timber Brought From North-East

926. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 93 wagons of timber. brought from North-East, have recently been detained at various Railway Stations including Nangloi in Delhi, Tinsukhia in Assam, Rajpura in Punjab and at other Railway Stations;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof, including the value of timber; and

(c) whether the timber mafia has since been traced and if so, the details thereof and the action taken against him?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) In exercise of powers vested with the Ministry •under orders of Supreme Court dated 15.1.1998 and 13.1.2000 in Writ Petition No. 202/1995, a total of 177 wagons suspected to contain illegal timber have been detained for carrying out physical verification and investigations at varioius places.

(b) and (c) Out of above, physical verification in respect of timber contained in 62 wagons have been completed. It has been found that these wagons contained 3244 cubic meter of sawn timber as against 2530 cubic meter of timber mentioned in the transit passes. The value of total timber has not been assessed. On the initiative of the Ministry, High Power Committee for North-East constituted by Supreme Court has suspended all clearances given to 60 wood-based units/consignors.

Implementation of Varahi Hydel Project

927. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Karnatka Government had requested for release of 275 ha. of forest land for implementation of the Varahi Hydel Project